



**1050th meeting of the
Pacific Coast Numismatic Society**

8:00PM Wednesday October 22, 2003

**Fort Mason, Building C, Room 370
San Francisco, California**

**The Old Streets of San Francisco -
Revisited
Jerry Schimmel**

**Pacific Coast Numismatic Society
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As many of you are aware, the September meeting had to be cancelled due to a conflict at the Taraval Police Station. Our next meeting will again be at Fort Mason on Wednesday, October 22, 2003. Jerry Schmmel's talk is entitled "The Old Streets of San Francisco – Revisited". More than you wanted to know about Frisco's tokens. New old streets, little known streets. Odd people and events connected to San Francisco.

CSNA Symposium The fourth CSNA symposium sponsored by the Society was very well received. Special thanks to Sarah Nordin, Herb Miles and Steve Huston for all their efforts in making this event another success! Thanks also to Stan Turrini who wrote the following press release. Look for coverage in your favorite national numismatic publications.

CSNA AND PCNS HOLD ANOTHER SUCCESFUL ALL-DAY

SYMPOSIUM The California State Numismatic Association (CSNA) and the Pacific Coast Numismatic Society (PCNS), of San Francisco, California, joined for their Fourth (4th) Annual Northern California Educational Symposium on Saturday, October 4, 2003 at Fort Mason Center, in San Francisco, California. Now in its fourth year as a joint effort by CSNA and PCNS, this year's Symposium drew some forty-plus (40+) coin hobbyists and numismatists, with one attendee as far as Seattle, Washington and two from Fresno, California plus one attendee driving three hours, each way, to enjoy the four invited speakers. The typical early Fall famous San Francisco, California weather of gray skies and light temperatures settled a pale cast over the day; however, inside Room 370 of the renovated Fort Mason Center, some forty coin hobbyists were educated and enlightened with the hobby and science of numismatics.

With the enthusiastic leadership by current PCNS President Michael F. Wehner, who was assisted by fellow PCNSers, Herbert Miles, Sarah Nordin, and Stephen M. Huston, coupled with the generous support from the California State Numismatic Association, under the leadership of its President G. Lee Kuntz, PCNS began nearly a year ago to plan to prepare for this annual all-day event. Four speakers, reflecting the approach of one speaker for one of the major subject areas of numismatics: ancient, paper money, exnumia, and United States History, shared their expertise and enthralled the audience. The first was Herb Miles, himself a PCNS Past President and recognized authority on Black Memorabilia, who spoke on *'The Scandal of the Booker T Washington Half Dollar'*. Mr. Miles noted that this Classic Commemorative, one of the last issues of the 1892-1954 commemoratives, was a scandalous story. He shared, from his extensive reading, that there were actually four separate questionable or unscrupulous actions involving this commemorative half dollar. The first was that the sponsoring commission and its principal promoter Sydney J. Phillips paid-off renowned sculptor and coin engraver Charles Keck, who had an extensive list of commemorative coinage creations, and refused Mr. Keck's submission, which has been lost over the artist chosen, the Black artist, Isaac Hathaway. Why Mr. Keck was paid a fee for work never submitted, and now lost, remains unsolved. The second was the ludicrous attempt to sell the gigantic mintage of 5,000,000 to the then entire Black population living within the United States of 15,000,000, which was a complete failure. Continuing, Mr. Miles stated the third was Sydney J. Phillips campaign to have another commemorative half dollar, namely the Washington-Carver authorized plus his repeated campaigns well into the 1960s for additional commemorative coinage! Lastly, he seemed never to 'give-up',

regardless that no accounting and audit of his organizations ever discovered where or for what money that was earned was ever spent on!

Mr. Miles started his talk with a biographical background of the great Black leader and educator, Booker T. Washington, and his particular devotion to the still existing Tuskegee Institute, in Alabama.

He also noted that while the Booker T. Washington Commemorative is not considered a popular commemorative or a creative design, coins in higher uncirculated grades are difficult, since the huge mintages were stored and shipped in mint bags, creating numerous bag marks.

The next speaker was Judy Kagin, daughter of revered A.M. 'Art' Kagin and sister to Dr. Donald H. Kagin, who spoke on *'The Paper Currency: Colonial America in the 1700s'*. Ms. Kagin noted that the 1700s should be identified as the 'paper century' for during this time the first ventures into the mass use of government-issued, if not backed, currency were first done. In fact, the first authorized issue of government currency in the Western Hemisphere was by the original Thirteen Colonies, with Massachusetts the first and South Carolina second. Paper Money would become so popular that at one-time the total amount of circulating money in the Thirteen Colonies was approximately one-fourth (1/4) in traditional hard money, specie, and three-fourth (3/4) paper money. Paper Money had advantages over hard money as gold and silver: it was easier in daily transactions and easier to produce, thus increasing the money supply readily. Technically, these initial issues of paper money were called 'bills of credit' and often issued for specific purposes, usually in payment of soldier and war debts. What caused for many years these first experiments in currency to be readily *accepted---for a time, at par---were* that many issues could be received in payment of taxes.

A devotee of American History, Ms. Kagin noted that the famous American Founding Father, Benjamin Franklin, was an advocate of paper money and a printer of it. She also explained the characteristics of genuine and counterfeit paper money, explaining the three factors of paper, color, and color of signatures. Sharing another interest in autographs, Ms. Kagin noted that those interested in assembling an album of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence can locate 'bills of credit' signed by some of the Signers, at more advantageous prices, than traditional autographed letter or signed documents. She also explained the origin of the saying 'carrying around pin money' is traced to the use of Colonial paper money.

Ruth Phillips, as the third speaker, began the afternoon session, with her *'California Tagus Ranch Tokens: I Owe My Soul To The Company Store'*. Mrs. Phillips began her talk explaining that her late husband had been interested in these tokens, of which there are only four types and that for over nearly three decades she has sought to write an article, instead was now glad to be a Symposium speaker.

Tagus Ranch was a huge farming operation in Tulare County, California, that at its height employed nearly two thousand year-round workers and operated farms over thousand of acres. The Merritt Family, father Hulett C. Merritt, and son, Lewis J. Merritt, although originally from Minnesota, came to California at the turn-of-the century, and became interested with and invested heavily in Central Valley agriculture. They would invest and develop many agricultural innovations and farming techniques.

In the need to retain a steady labor force, they had built small homes and towns, and including schools, a bank, service stations, restaurants, and assorted shops. Their *tokens---issued in values of One Dollar, Fifty Cents, Twenty-Five Cents, and One Cent---were* done in the years of mid-1920s through early 1940s for their

labors shopping at the Tagus Ranch stores. Tokens spent were charged against the worker's wages.

Although quite common and readily available, not much is known about the manufacturing and mintages of these tokens, save that the Los Angeles Rubber Stamp Company produced these, and the composition was brass. Sizes were One Dollar, 35mm. Fifty Cents, 25mm, Five Cents, 22mm, and One Cent, 18mm. Mrs. Phillips noted that the Tagus Ranch was part of the background for John Steinbeck's true-to-life novels, *EAST OF EDEN* and *THE GRAPHS OF WRATH*. Mrs. Phillips has served both PCNS and CSNA as President and Vice-President.

The final speaker was a returnee from the 2002 Symposium, Ben Damsky, who presented his *'Rebellion and Civil War: Year 68'*. A serious scholar of Ancient Roman coinage, Mr. Damsky used coins from his own renowned collections and others to create a PowerPoint presentation, which reviewed the two Roman Emperors and events of one year, 68, from the fall of Nero through the murder of Galba, his successor. Roman coinage was issued in prolific numbers, and during Galba's short reign of only a few months, the number of types, varieties, and mints would compute to an issue at the average of four (4) new ones each day!

Reviewing Roman history, Mr. Damsky explained that Galba, as most all Emperors, used coinage as propaganda and symbolic reference for this-or-that message to the populace. The portrayal of a certain god or goddess or a certain object, as simple as a leaf or staff or temple, would convey a meaning or message. For Mr. Damsky, this is one of his primary joys in collecting ancient Roman Imperial coinages: learning and interpreting these copious symbols. For example, an oak reef refers to civic duty and a rudder to governmental authority.

Mr. Damsky produced and distributed a multi-page pamphlet, which summarized his presentation and added references and explanations to each and every coin shared. His enthusiasm was evident when he stated that one particular rare coin he had missed the winning bid back in 1982 and had to wait twenty years for another opportunity to bid! The second time he was the successful bidder, adding the coin to his presentation.

Among his numerous historical anecdotes was that King George III, the famous King mentioned in our nation's Declaration of Independence, was an avid collector of Ancient Imperial Roman coinage, which his son, later King George IV, sold to the British Museum, which still retains the King George III's original coin cabinet housing the collection. The other mate cabinet is now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York City, New York.

Michael Wehner, and Ruth Phillips, as CSNA Past President, presented each speaker two engraved medals: one from CSNA and one from PCNS.

G. Lee Kuntz, current CSNA President, who due to business conflicts was unable to attend, wrote his regrets and wished all left the Symposium "numismatically richer". Mr. Kuntz continues being a strong booster for CSNA's two annual Educational Symposiums: March in southern California and October in northern California.